



National Alliance on Mental Illness

July 24, 2008

To Nebraska Behavioral Health Oversight Commission:

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Nebraska would like to extend our Congratulations and Thank You for consenting to this important leadership role in Nebraska's Behavioral Health Reformation. Our organization consists of over 500 consumers, families, and providers who are all very concerned with the improvement and transformation of mental health services in Nebraska. We would be pleased to provide any input and information gathering that your commission should need to effectively perform your duties. I have attached a statement of our mission and descriptions of our programs that serve consumers and families at the grassroots level.

As a member of the former commission, I hope you will read the report of the previous Commission very carefully. Please note on Page 6 the goals and responsibilities that were not accomplished. We would like to work with you to develop more consumer involvement in all aspects of service planning and delivery which is an important part of the development of a consumer focused culture, driven by the needs of consumers. In other states, the NAMI organizations have been instrumental in developing effective consumer/family teams that perform quality improvement services, developed and implemented peer support services, and other services that are innovative, research based, focus on recovery, and include peer support.

Our office receives phone calls daily that inform us of the needs of people seeking to find behavioral health services. Our Executive Director, Jonah Deppe, could tell you the problems of people waiting several months to see a psychiatrist to get medication adjustments. These are people who are trying to keep working and take care of their families. They cannot afford to take the time out to go into the hospital, and may not need that level of service. We need more alternatives when they are seeking help. We have recently been able to increase the number of support groups we offer across the state through training about 20 consumers in the Connections program. These groups are listed on our website at www.nami.org/sites/ne

At our recent NAMI Walk, Saturday, June 21, in Elmwood Park in Omaha, over 700 people shared stories, enjoyed each other and celebrated our success at breaking down stigma about mental illness and promoting recovery for those who deal daily with their illness. It was a wonderful day for people with mental illness and their families in Nebraska. Several of you helped us sponsor that Walk. We invite you all to attend our Awards Reception on August 12 and visit our office. Please let us know how we can assist you to transform the Nebraska Behavioral Health System into an effective progressive system we can all be proud of.

Thank you again for your time and work with the Behavioral Health Oversight Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Linda", is written over the typed name.

Linda E. Jensen RN, MN, PhD
President, NAMI Nebraska

A champion for recovery, NAMI-Nebraska is a statewide not for profit membership organization that provides high quality education and support services through its affiliates to those whose lives are touched by mental illness. It collaborates with other organizations, governmental bodies, and advocates to improve services and quality of life for people with mental illness and their families.

DRAFT ELEVATOR TALK –

NAMI Nebraska members and affiliates are advocates for persons with a mental illness and their families and promote recovery through the Connection Recovery Support Groups, Family to Family Education Program, and Family Support Groups. Public Education is provided with our efforts related to In Our Own Voice and Parents and Teachers as Allies presentations.

Connection Recovery Support Groups

Support groups offer a casual and relaxed approach to sharing the challenges and successes of coping with mental illness. There is no need to register – just come when you feel like you need someone to talk to. Meetings last 90 minutes and follow a flexible structure. Groups are led by trained individuals who are in recovery themselves.

Family to Family Education Program

F2F is an education program for family members. F2F provides information about illnesses of the brain and their treatment. Participants learn coping skills including problem solving, listening and communication techniques, and strategies for handling crises and relapse. There is a focus on care for the caregiver: coping with worry, stress, and emotional overload. Guidance is provided on locating appropriate supports and services within the community. Information is provided on advocacy initiatives to improve and expand services.

Family Support Groups

Family Support Groups are provided by trained facilitators who are family members of a person with a mental illness. It differs from the more traditional “share and care” model in that it offers an innovative set of group structures and processes specifically designed to help support caregivers dealing with mental illness. Full group participation is encouraged resulting in upbeat constructive support group meetings.

In Our Own Voice

The In Our Own Voice: Living with Mental Illness Program is NAMI's national effort to educate the general public and, more importantly, change the attitudes, preconceived notions and stereotypes of who and what persons living with mental illness look and act like. This is accomplished through community presentations. The In Our Own Voice presentation demonstrates how individuals with severe mental illness experience recovery. Each presenter has been through training to translate the story of his or her own struggles and successes.

Parents and Teachers as Allies

Parents and Teachers as Allies is an in-service mental health education program for school professionals. The two-hour in-service program focuses on helping school professionals and families within the school community better understand the early warning signs of mental illnesses in children and adolescents and how best to intervene so that youth with mental health treatment needs are linked with services. It also covers the lived experience of mental illnesses and how schools can best communicate with families about mental health related concerns.

Call 866-403-0077 or 877-463-6264



July 16, 2008

Dear Friends of NAMI:

It was a beautiful day for a Walk - and nearly 700 people agreed and joined together in Omaha for the first ever **NAMI Walks For the Mind of America**. On Saturday, June 21, 2008 in Elmwood Park a larger than anticipated crowd shared stories, enjoyed each other and celebrated our success at breaking down stigma about mental illness and promoting recovery for those who deal daily with their illness. It was a wonderful day for people with mental illness and their families in Nebraska. And it was a proud day for NAMI in Nebraska!

We owe this first ever NAMI Walk success in large part to you and the many sponsors and individuals who financially supported the Walk and helped us to promote NAMI and its programs. The money raised will be used to continue and expand the NAMI signature programs. In total, thirty-nine businesses and individuals provided the sponsorship for the Walk and raised nearly \$60,000 in financial support. Individual walkers and a total of 66 teams raised an additional \$50,000. This first NAMI Walk for mental illness exceeded expectations and raised nearly \$110,000. **Thank you** for your support and for being a part of this most important effort.

Team members walked with pride wearing T-shirts reading: No Shame, Team dyNAMItte, United We Walk and NAMI Saves Lives. Green wrist bands read "Expect Recovery" and were illustrative of the sense of optimism in the air. This was a community of people who made a statement - ***we can make a difference*** - and because of your support, you are a part of what was so very special that beautiful Saturday morning.

We wish to express our appreciation to you by inviting you to an **Awards Reception**:

NAMI WALKS AWARDS RECEPTION

AUGUST 12, 2008

4:00 - 5:30 PM

LASTING HOPE RECOVERY CENTER

415 SOUTH 26th AVE

LIGHT HORS D'OEUVRES AND SOFT DRINKS

RSVP by August 5th: ltaylor@commall.org or by calling 402-341-5128

We would also like to show you the new NAMI Nebraska office space in the annex building of Lasting Hope Recovery Center. We hope that you will be able to join us at the Awards Reception. This is an opportunity to close the page on this year's first ever NAMI Walk and kick off for NAMI WALKS 2009! We look forward to your participation with us next year.

Sincerely,

Aileen M. Brady
Volunteer Co-Walk Manager

Jonah Deppe
NAMI - NE Executive Director